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MAHARASHTRA ROLLS BACK ITS DIKTAT ON HINDI AS 3RD LANGUAGE

Maharashtra has stayed its order to make Hindi mandatory as a third language for Classes 1 to 5 in Marathi and English-medium schools

DECISION COMES AFTER STIFF OPPOSITION

The decision taken last week met with stiff resistance from different quarters, including some opposition parties, and comes days after the Maharashtra government's language consultation committee urged CM Devendra Fadnavis to revoke the decision. School Education Minister Dada Bhuse said the Centre did not pressure them to "impose" Hindi

LEARNING HINDI WILL BE MADE VOLUNTARY

- A senior minister of Maharashtra government said a new order will be issued making it voluntary to learn Hindi in these classes
- Rahul Rekhawar, Director of the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), said efforts will be taken to ensure students do not feel any pressure of learning a third language

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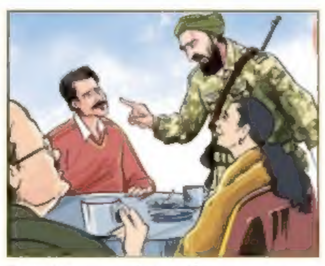
LANGUAGE FORMULA IS PART OF THE NEW CURRICULUM UNDER NEP

CHENNAI ▪ MADURAI ▪ VIJAYAWADA ▪ BENGALURU ▪ KOCHI ▪ HYDERABAD ▪ VISAKHAPATNAM ▪ COIMBATORE ▪ KOZHIKODE ▪ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM ▪ BELAGAVI ▪ BHUBANESWAR ▪ SHIVAMOGGA ▪ MANGALURU ▪ TIRUPATI ▪ TIRUCHY ▪ TIRUNELVELI ▪ SAMBALPUR ▪ HUBBALLI ▪ DHARMAPURI ▪ KOTTAYAM ▪ KANNUR ▪ VILLUPURAM ▪ KOLLAM ▪ TADEPALLIGUDEM ▪ NAGAPATTINAM ▪ THRISSUR ▪ KALABURAGI

ILLUSTRATION: MANDAR PARDIKAR

Tourists enjoying a balmy afternoon at Baisaran meadow, a non-motorable spot about 5-10 km from Pahalgam



Terrorists in combat uniform emerge from the dense forest around the site, ask tourists to identify themselves

Terrorists selectively open fire on Hindus; 28 killed, including two foreigners and a couple of locals

Video grab of security personnel taking scared tourists to safety at the massacre site in J&K's Pahalgam

28 MASSACRED IN J&K

FAYAZ WANI @ Srinagar

IN one of the biggest attacks on tourists coinciding with the visit of US Vice President J D Vance to India, terrorists on Tuesday massacred 28 people, most of them tourists, in J&K's Pahalgam area and injuring many others. Among the victims were two foreigners from UAE and Nepal and a couple of locals.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi cut short his visit to Saudi Arabia and returned home after the business part of his trip was over.

Official sources said two-three terrorists emerged from the dense forest around the Baisaran meadow, a scenic but non-motorable spot about 5-10 km from Pahalgam around 2.30 pm. They were heavily armed and in combat uniform. The terrorists separated the Hindu tourists from the rest after checking their identity and fired on them indiscriminately, sources said.

Waseem Khan, a security guard, said he heard the firing but initially thought it was due to firecrackers. "The firing continued for 10 minutes. As there were cries, we rushed to the spot and saw bodies lying on the ground. Some of them were dead and some injured," he said.

Baisaran, which is known as mini Switzerland for its lush green meadows, can be reached only through foot or on horses. "You cannot go to the area in the vehicles because there is no motorable road," he said.

In a viral video, a woman tourist, whose husband was shot at by militants, said, "We were enjoying *bhelpuri* and my husband was sitting by my side, when an individual came and shot at him. He thought he is not a Muslim and fired. "Please save my husband," she pleaded.

One of the victims was Manjunath Rao, a businessman from Shivamogga district of Karnataka. The victims included Prasant Kumar Satpathy from Odisha, Manish Ranjan from Hyderabad and another from Kochi.

A tourist from Maw Nagar, Gujarat, said he was travelling on horseback when the terrorists fired. "I was hit in the right arm," he said. He is under treatment in Anantnag.

The Resistance Front, a shadow group of Lashkar-e-Toiba, claimed responsibility for the attack. P4,5,9

Resolve to fight terror unshakeable: Modi

Condemning the terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam that killed 26 people, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said that those behind the heinous act will be brought to justice. In a post on X, the PM said, "They (terrorists) will not be spared! Their evil agenda will never succeed. Our resolve to fight terrorism is unshakable and it will get even stronger." Modi also conveyed his condolences to those who lost their loved ones in the attack. "I pray that the injured recover at the earliest. All possible assistance is being provided to those affected," he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi looks at the fighter jets of Royal Saudi Air Force escorting his aircraft as it arrives in Jeddah on Tuesday | PTI

PM CUTS SHORT SAUDI VISIT

JAYANTH JACOB @ New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday decided to cut short his state visit to Saudi Arabia and return to India in the wake of the J&K terror attack. He was originally scheduled to return on Wednesday night, but will now arrive in New Delhi early Wednesday morning. He also skipped the official dinner hosted in his honour by the Saudi government.

The terror attack, which occurred during Modi's historic visit to Jeddah — the first by an Indian prime minister in 40 years — cast a shadow over the otherwise high-level engagements. Sources said the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) is expected to meet at the earliest to assess the situation. The move comes as world leaders continue to express their condolences and solidarity with India over the incident.

Earlier in the day, he asked Union Home Minister Amit Shah to visit Srinagar to take charge of the situation. Shah held a high-level meeting with senior officials through video conferencing soon after the attack and landed in Srinagar by 9pm.

PM Modi had arrived in Saudi Arabia on Tuesday on a two-day visit aimed at strengthening the strategic partnership between the two nations, with a special focus on defence and energy cooperation. The visit was at the invitation of Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, as both countries sought to deepen collaboration in key sectors critical to regional stability and economic growth. At least six agreements were expected to be signed during the visit.

Modi said India deeply values its long and historic ties with Saudi Arabia that have acquired strategic depth and momentum in recent years.

"Together, we have developed a mutually beneficial and substantive partnership including in the domains of defence, trade, investment, energy and people to people ties. We have shared interest and commitment to promote regional peace, prosperity, security and stability," he said.

S'mogga realtor shot dead in front of wife

Manjunath Rao, who was killed in the terror attack, was a Shivamogga-based realtor. Manjunath, 48, his wife and son had gone to Kashmir to celebrate his son's success in the II PU exam. Pallavi, Manjunath's wife, told news channels that the terrorists shot dead her husband in front of her. "My husband was speaking with a shopkeeper when terrorists opened fire. They shot him in the head," she said | P4

B'luru engineer dies, wife, son survive

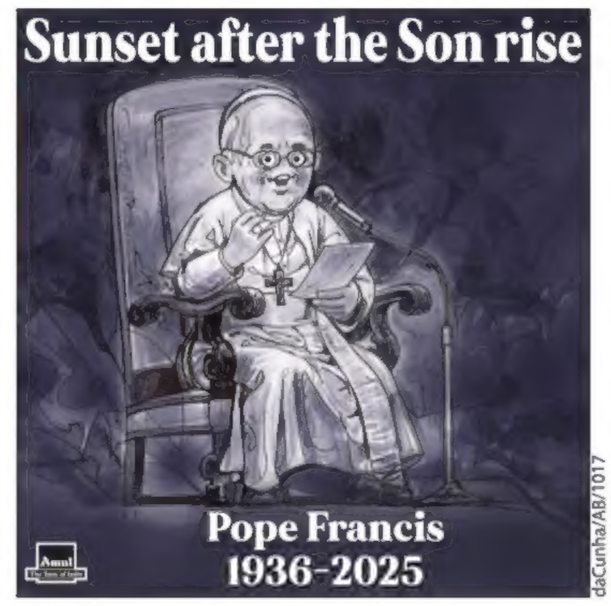
Bharat Bhushan, 41, an engineer from Bengaluru, is among the dead in Tuesday terror attack in Pahalgam. His wife and their three-year-old son survived the attack. Bhushan's parents shifted to Mathikere in Bengaluru a few years ago from Haveri | P4

Those involved will not be spared: Shah

"Those involved in this dastardly act of terror will not be spared. We will come down heavily on the perpetrators with the harshest consequences." Union home minister Amit Shah said

Omar: Perpetrators are animals, inhuman

"This attack on our visitors is an abomination. The perpetrators of this attack are animals — inhuman and worthy of contempt. No words of condemnation are enough," CM Omar Abdullah said



2 docs from K'taka among top 50 UPSC rank-holders

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi/Bengaluru

SHAKTI Dubey has topped the civil services examination 2024, with Harshita Goyal and Dongre Archit Parag getting the second and third ranks, respectively, according to the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). The results were declared on Tuesday. Topper Dubey holds a B.Sc degree in Biochemistry from the University of Allahabad.

Shakti Dubey

R Rangamanju

Two doctors from Karnataka are among the top 50 rank-holders. More than 30 candidates from Karnataka have cleared the exams. While 29-year-old Dr R Rangamanju secured 24th rank, Dr Sachin Basavaraj Guttur bagged 41st rank.

Rangamanju, son of R Ramesh, a former IPS officer, who passed away a few years ago, said that he managed to clear the exams in his last attempt. He said it was tough to clear the prelims. "I couldn't clear the prelims in my first three attempts. In my fourth and fifth attempts, I cleared the prelims, but failed in the mains. In the last attempt, I cleared all three stages," he said.

"I started working as a doctor, but stopped. I have been focusing on the UPSC exams for the past 1.5 years. I spent at least eight hours a day preparing for the exams. I used to spend one hour reading newspapers," he said, adding that he stayed away from social media during this time. Dr Rangamanju said that he did not receive any formal coaching, but tried 'test series' and took interview guidance from coaching institutions.

Dr Sachin, who has roots in Ranebennur's Kodiyala village, cleared the exams in his fourth attempt. He said he is the first in his family to get a degree. Sachin said he became a doctor as per his father's wish and then started preparing for the exams. He said that he did not lose confidence even after failing three attempts earlier and continued his studies.

Among the candidates who cleared the exams from Karnataka are: Shivam Singh (AIR 73), Tejasvi Prasad Deshpande (AIR 99), Anupriya Sakya (AIR 120), Meghana BM (AIR 425), Madhavi R (AIR 446), Prativa Lama (AIR 461) and others.

Bengaluru road rage: IAF officer booked for attempt to murder

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

WING Commander Shiladitya Bose, who allegedly assaulted a call centre employee in a road rage case on Monday and had claimed that he did it in 'self-defence' as the latter allegedly assaulted him first, has been booked for attempt to murder by Byappanahalli police. Meanwhile, biker SJ Vikas Kumar, 26, who was arrested on Monday, was released on station bail on Tuesday. An FIR was registered based on a complaint by Vikas Kumar. The driver of the car (HR 51 BA 8568) has been named as the accused. Bose's wife, Madhumitha Dutta, 37, was driving the car.

Meanwhile, Home Minister Dr G Parameshwara said Bose is absconding. The police, in all possibilities, will ask Bose to appear before the investigation officer. If he does not, a team of policemen will go to Kolkata to arrest him. "A case has been registered against Bose at Byappanahalli police station based on the complaint by Vikas Kumar on Monday at 7 pm," D Devaraja, DCP, East, told reporters.

The police have also booked the IAF officer for causing hurt, snatching, mischief and intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace. Section 109 of BNS (attempt to murder) is non-bailable. The offence is also cognisable, which means the police can arrest Bose without a warrant, and non-compoundable. This means, the case cannot be settled out of court.

CONTINUED ON P2

Kannada forums want officer's arrest

Kannada organisations have come in support of biker Vikas Kumar and demanded the arrest of Wing Commander Shiladitya Bose. The outfits slammed the IAF officer for making false claims on social media and dragging Kannada and Kannadigas into the controversy.

It is not in our culture to attack or abuse others over linguistic matters. Karnataka has a long and proud tradition of embracing people from across the country

Siddaramaiah, Chief Minister

EXPRESS READ

Tour of Soudha at Rs 150

Bengaluru: Going on a guided tour inside Vidhana Soudha will cost just Rs 150. "Tickets should be booked only online and people are expected to upload some documents," Legislative Assembly Speaker UT Khader said | P2

Krishnadevaraya tomb cleaned

Koppal: Following reports of meat being sold at the Sri Krishnadevaraya tomb at Anegundi, the monument was cleaned up on Monday. Tourism Minister HK Patil, who visited Anegundi, said an FIR has been filed against three people | P4

'INDEFENSIBLE'

Delhi HC tears into Ramdev on 'Sharbat jihad'

CAN HOLD VIEWS IN HEAD, NOT EXPRESS THEM: JUDGE

"He (Ramdev) can hold these opinions in his head, need not express them," ruled Justice Amit Bansal of the Delhi High Court, before listing the matter for further hearing on May 1

SHEKHAR SINGH
@ New Delhi

YOGA guru and Patanjali founder Baba Ramdev on Tuesday was ordered by the Delhi High Court to take down videos in which he made communal remarks targeting food company Hamdard and its popular drink 'Rooh Afza'. The move follows a civil lawsuit filed by Hamdard National Foundation (India) after Ramdev accused the company of funding religious institutions and used the term 'sharbat jihad' to describe their product.

Justice Amit Bansal of the Delhi High Court said the Patanjali founder's comments in the videos were "indefensible" and "shocked the conscience of the court." Senior Advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Hamdard, submitted, "This is a case which goes beyond disparagement. This is a case of creating communal divide, akin to hate speech. It will not have protection from law of defamation," Rohatgi submitted.

The video, posted on April 3, contained explicit references to Rooh Afza, with Ramdev alleging that buying the drink funded religious extremism. Senior Advocate Rajiv Nayar, appearing for Ramdev, said the videos are being taken down

Justice Bansal directed Ramdev to file an affidavit that he would refrain from posting divisive content on social media in future.